

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 2nd December 2020 Zoom Video Conference Call

Minutes

Attendance

Members

Alan Winstone*

Chair

Observers

Gareth Bevington

Welsh Government

Howard Mattocks

Beaumaris Town Council

James Wilson*

Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd

Julian Bray

Welsh Government

Kate Griffith

Natural Resources Wales

Kim Mould

BMWAG

Michelle Billing

Welsh Government

Trevor Jones

Menai Strait (West)

Advisors

Jim Andrews*

MSFOMA Secretariat

Notes

** These individuals are also Directors of the Association*

1. Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair proposed, and it was agreed, that items 11 & 12 on the agenda should be discussed when Welsh Government officials joined the meeting as it was understood that they had other pressing engagements that would prevent them from participating in the entire meeting.

2. Apologies

Gareth Roberts

Bangor City Council / Gwynedd C.C.

Ioan Thomas

Gwynedd County Council

Iwan Huws

Isle of Anglesey County Council

Keith Andrews*

Licensed hand pickers

Lewis le Vay

Bangor University

3. Declarations of Interest

Because this meeting was conducted as a video conference which prevented the register of interests being circulated, the Chair asked participants in the meeting to declare an interest in each agenda item before speaking.

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on the 16th September 2020 were accepted.

5. Matters Arising

It was considered that most of the matters arising from the last meeting were addressed on the agenda for the current meeting.

Some items raised at the September meeting that were not formally addressed on the agenda were discussed:-

Sand in Penrhyn Dock

James Wilson has now written several times to the Estate's land agent. The accumulation of sand has been significantly restricting the tidal window for access to Port Penrhyn. The company that had been leasing the dock and unloading sand had relinquished its lease. It was agreed that further efforts should be made to encourage removal of this sand.

Action: JW, Secretariat

Bangor pier

The Secretariat had contacted the Pier Master about the proposal to reinstate the tea rooms on Bangor Pier. He had sent his apologies for the meeting. It was agreed that this item should be rolled forward to the next meeting.

Action: Secretariat

6. Register of Interests

No changes were recorded.

7. Financial Update

The financial report was accepted. It was noted that both income and expenditure had been lower than expected for the first quarter of the year. The lower expenditure has been in part due to delays in the process for renewing the Menai Strait Fishery Orders. The Association presently has more funds in Reserves than budgeted.

The Secretariat had been in contact with Cllr Mattocks (Beaumaris) and Cllr Griffiths (Bangor) to explore opportunities for making donations to projects within each authority's district. Cllr Mattocks had spoken to the town clerk in Beaumaris and had identified the opportunity to make a contribution to work on a children's playground overlooking the Strait. He asked the Secretariat to contact the town clerk to progress this.

Action: Secretariat

It was agreed that Bangor City Council should be asked once again for any funding ideas.

Action: Secretariat

The Secretariat and accountant are working to progress VAT registration for the Association ready for the start of the next Financial Year.

Action: Secretariat

It was agreed that it would be appropriate to review the Association's approach to electronic banking, and that a paper about this should be presented to the next meeting.

Action: Secretariat

8. Public Profile of the Association

The number of tweets and profile of the Association continues to grow steadily. It now has over 1,100 followers and had over 23,000 tweet impressions in the 28 days prior to this meeting.

All present were reminded of the value of the public profile of the Association and were asked to remember to send items of interest to Andy Olivier for him to Tweet.

Action: All

The Chair and Secretariat had recently concluded that it would be appropriate to review the Association's social media strategy. Andy Olivier has successfully increased the following and readership of the Association's Twitter feed over the past year. It was agreed that a discussion should be held with him to develop a clear strategy for this area of work.

Action: Secretariat & Chair

9. Welsh Government Activity

Welsh Government officials Gareth Bevington, Michelle Billing and Julian Bray were welcomed to the meeting.

The Secretariat's report was noted and received.

a) Meetings

A meeting of the Welsh Marine Fisheries Advisory Group (WMFAG) was due to take place on the evening of the 3rd December.

Trevor Jones is a member of WMFAG. He had tabled a question for the Minister about the importance of making progress with making new Fishery Orders for the Menai Strait

No meetings of any other WG fisheries groups had taken place

b) Consultations

It was noted that there are no current WG consultations underway of relevance to MSFOMA.

c) Fisheries Bill

Feedback from Welsh Government has been that this Bill will not affect the shellfish farming industry in the Menai Strait. The Secretariat has been in touch with the Shellfish Association of Great Britain about this issue, and representations were made to Defra about the risk of unintended adverse impacts on shellfish farming. No significant changes were made to the Act in response to this. On 24th November 2020, the Bill received Royal Assent.

d) WG officials

It was noted that regular engagement with WG officials has continued and that this was proving to be beneficial.

10. NW IFCA Activity

The report on recent activities of the NW IFCA was received and accepted by the meeting.

It was noted with sadness that the IFCA's Senior Scientist, Mandy Knott, was leaving. Ms Knott has served for 10 years and has worked closely with the mussel industry. All agreed that she would be missed and that thanks should be passed on to her on behalf of the Association.

Action: Secretariat

Concerns were raised about the potential loss of capacity and continuity at the IFCA and it was agreed that the Association should extend an offer to the Authority to assist wherever possible.

Action: Secretariat

Trevor Jones reported that he was due to stand down as an appointee to the Authority at Easter, having served for 10 years. Kim Mould has applied to the Marine Management Organisation to be appointed to the Authority.

11. Menai Strait East Fishery Order

The Chair introduced this item. It was noted that the Association had applied for a new Fishery Order in the eastern Menai Strait in August 2018. The existing Order is due to expire on 31st March 2022. Progress with the new Order had fallen behind schedule during 2020.

Gareth Bevington stated to the meeting that Welsh Government are committed to delivering a new Order for the eastern Menai Strait on time. He considered that the March 2022 deadline for making a new Order to replace the existing one was achievable. He referred to the Minister's recent letter to the Association as an indication of the level of commitment to Fishery Orders by the Welsh Government.

Gareth outlined several areas where Welsh Government had considered to be challenging (notably a lack of clarity about governance of the Association; whether a hybrid Order was necessary; the term of a new Order; and also whether it was appropriate to include oysters in the named species). These issues have now all been addressed. A case for making a new Order is being drafted for the Minister. If her approval is granted, a draft Statutory Instrument will then be prepared ready for the start of the formal consultation period.

Mussel farmers present welcomed the news of progress but were concerned that time was very tight. It was noted that the production cycle for mussels is such that any mussels relayed in the area in 2021 would not be harvested until late 2022 at the earliest, which is after the expiry of the existing Order. It was also felt that WG officials did not appreciate the business risks associated with mussel farming: annual overheads for all the operators are typically £3-400k per year.

The Association referred to the recommendations in the paper presented to the meeting and resolved to progress with "like for like" renewal of the Order.

The Association agreed to continue to work with WG officials to progress with the creation of a new Fishery Order for the eastern Menai Strait.

a) Leasing and licensing procedures

The revised procedures that were presented to the meeting were endorsed. The Secretariat was asked to publish these procedures on the MSFOMA website, along with the application forms (both the PDF and electronic application form).

Action: Secretariat

b) Engagement with stakeholders

It was agreed that engagement with stakeholders was important, but there was still uncertainty about the timetable for progress, which made it difficult to make firm plans to progress this. It was agreed that the Chair and Secretariat should work together to identify and progress opportunities for this.

Action: Chair & Secretariat

12. Menai Strait West

The report was received and discussed.

It was noted that the sticking point for this new Fishery Order concerns the policy and management approach to Pacific Oysters. It has been hoped that Welsh Government would be able to make progress with this issue independently, but it seems that the UK administrations are now adopting a unified approach.

Kim Mould reported that A briefing was given to a recent Shellfish Association of Great Britain Mollusc Committee meeting by Defra about Pacific Oysters. They have commissioned 3 research projects that are due to report in March 2021.

The Secretariat had previously been asked by WG officials to propose a “triploid conversion plan” to help to manage this issue in the Menai Strait. It was not clear whether this would now be regarded as appropriate mitigation, but the Secretariat was asked to investigate further (through liaison with SAGB) and take appropriate action between this and the next Association meeting.

Action: Secretariat

All agreed that it was important to maintain progress with this application and that regular meetings between WG officials and the Association should resume at the earliest opportunity.

Action: Secretariat

13. Funding proposals

Lewis le Vay had tendered his apologies. An update on progress would be provide to the nest meeting.

14. Fishery Management Issues

a) Coastal / marine developments

i. Bangor Pier

The pier master had given his apologies to the meeting. It was agreed that an update should be sought from the pier master.

Action: Secretariat

ii. Sand in the dock

Further to the earlier discussion it was agreed that action should be taken to address this issue as appropriate.

Action: JW, Secretariat

b) Environmental / health issues

i. Bangor to Treborth rising main

James Wilson reported that Dŵr Cymru had been in touch to propose a meeting to discuss their strategy with respect to this outfall which has had problems recently. An update would be provided to the next meeting.

ii. Shellfish hygiene classification

No further update.

iii. Bonamia

No further update.

iv. Invasive Alien Species (IAS) / Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Kate Griffith reported that NRW are trialling the use of ROVs to look for *Crepidula fornicata* in subtidal areas as a response to the Covid-19 restrictions that have prevented “normal” surveys.

Kate asked if anyone else had any underwater video footage of the seabed in the western Menai Strait, and if this could be shared with NRW.

Action: All

It was understood that Shaun Krijnen had found and reported a single empty *C. fornicata* shell, and that an NRW officer had found a cobble with 2-3 live individuals on it at Newborough.

Trevor Jones reported that he had looked carefully on the Anglesey shore opposite Port Dinorwic and found no *C. fornicata*.

Kate reported that the Marine Biological Association had recently produced a report about the risk of INNS for the Penllyn a'r Sarnau SAC MPA features. She offered to circulate this.

Action: KG / Secretariat

v. Norovirus

No further update.

15. Any Other Business

a) Correspondence

No additional correspondence had been received.

16. Dates for next meetings

The schedule of meetings for 2021 was agreed (all meetings being on the 2nd Wednesday of each month):-

- a. Q1 2021 - 10th March
- b. Q2 2021 - 9th June
- c. Q3 2021 - 8th September
- d. Q4 2020 - 8th December [AGM]

Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility
1.	Sand in Dock -contact Penrhyn Estate to raise further concerns about this issue & propose site visit.	JW / Secretariat
2.	Bangor pier - ask pier master for update about tearoom proposal.	Secretariat
3.	Finances - send reminders to debtors.	Secretariat
4.	Community Fund - progress proposal for funding playground in Beaumaris with local authority.	Secretariat
5.	Community Fund - ask Bangor City Council for suggestions for funding opportunities.	Secretariat
6.	VAT - progress registration of Association	Secretariat
7.	Electronic banking - paper for next Association meeting.	Secretariat
8.	Social media - Secretariat to send a summary of headlines from today's meeting, and all to send any items suitable for the MSFOMA Twitter feed to Andy Olivier (avdsolivier@gmail.com).	All
9.	Public profile - work with Andy Olivier on a strategy.	Secretariat, Chair.
10.	NWIFCA - thank Mandy Knott, Senior Scientist, for her work over the past 10 years.	Secretariat
11.	NWIFCA - help with survey work if / when appropriate.	Secretariat
12.	Menai East - publish revised procedures and application forms for leases & licences on MSFOMA website.	Secretariat
13.	Menai East - maintain monthly discussions with WG officials to ensure progress is maintained.	Secretariat
14.	Menai East - progress stakeholder engagement as far as possible.	Secretariat
15.	Menai West - liaise with SAGB about <i>C. gigas</i> discussions.	Kate Griffith
16.	Menai West - maintain regular discussions with WG officials to ensure progress is maintained.	Secretariat
17.	Look out for <i>Crepidula fornicata</i> and report sightings of any shells / individuals.	All
18.	Share any relevant underwater video with NRW.	All
19.	Share MBA report for Penllyn a'r Sarnau with MSFOMA members	Kate Griffith
20.	Date for next meeting - 10 th March 2021	Secretariat